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C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 002793

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/25/2015

TAGS: PREL IZ FR

SUBJECT: FRENCH RAISE CONTINUED CONCERNS ON BAGHDAD AIRPORT  
ROAD ACCESS

REF: A. BAGHDAD 1669

1B. PARIS 2661

Classified By: Acting DCM Josiah Rosenblatt, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Senior French MFA and Presidency officials raised continuing concerns over access to the Baghdad airport road, on the margins of highly constructive discussions on Iraq with Senior Advisor and Coordinator for Iraq Ambassador Richard Jones April 25 (septel). Presidential Advisor on the Middle East/Americas Dominique Boche expressed thanks for Embassy Baghdad efforts (ref a), which had satisfied French concerns on Green Zone access. At the same time, Boche reiterated continued concern on the airport road, and stressed that the GoF was still seeking access to the "protected lane." He stressed that the airport road was more dangerous than ever, with the number of attacks on the rise, so this was a sensitive point and high-level concern for the GoF. MFA A/S-equivalent for Middle East/North Africa Jean-Francois Thibault raised similar points with Ambassador Jones, stressing that the GoF was seeking equal treatment in access to the airport road.

12. (C) Ambassador Jones, in response, noted that Embassy Baghdad was working with MNF-1 and the Iraqi government on revising the security and access procedures for the airport, which had delayed resolution of French concerns. Once the new system was in place, France would receive the same treatment as others. Both Boche and Thibault took Ambassador Jones' points on board, but appeared eager for resolution of the airport road issue soonest.

13. (C) We appreciate Baghdad's quick response to French security concerns in Baghdad (reftels) and would welcome additional updates post can offer on the airport access issue.

14. (U) Ambassador Jones cleared this message. Baghdad minimize considered.

WOLFF